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Voting Assistance Available On-line

The Army's latest Voting Assistance Program for 2004-2005 is now available on-line. The guide, published yearly by the Federal Voting Assistance Program, can be downloaded at www.fvap.gov. U.S. Army Human Resources Command also has a website with information on voting at <https://www.perscomonline.army.mil/tagd/pssd/psb/voting/votingindex.htm>.

The voting guide contains information on the program, instructions for voting assistance officers and a state-by-state breakdown of absentee and voting procedures.

According to information from U.S. Army Human Resources Command, the main goal of the program is "to make registration and voting information, materials, and assistance readily available to all eligible Army voters and provide them every opportunity and encouragement to register and cast a ballot in the 2004/2005 elections."

Voting assistance officers are appointed by units. Soldiers should contact their chain-of-command for information on a unit's VAO. Installations also appoint a VAO and Soldiers are also free to contact that resource.

A large number of seats are up for re-election in 2004, making voting assistance especially important this year. The President, 34 U.S. Senators, 435 House of Representatives members, 13 state governors and several state and local positions officials will be elected.

Those needing information on absentee ballots, the candidates and the issues can receive it through Democrats Abroad and Republicans Abroad. Those addresses respectively are: Executive Director Democrats Abroad, 430 S. Capitol Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003 (<http://www.democratsabroad.org>) and Andrew Goldberg, Republicans Abroad, 310 First St., SE, Washington, DC 20003 (<http://www.republicationsabroad.org>).

Overseas soldiers and DA civilians and their family members can consult Misc. Pub. 360-04.05, the Voting Assistance Guide, for information on voting. The Army hosts its annual voter registration month in August 2004. The goal is to brief soldiers on their right to vote as well as provide training on absentee registration and voting.

Some important facts to remember are that it is illegal for commissioned, warrant and noncommissioned officers to use military authority to influence anyone to vote or not vote, and that while candidates may visit installation to speak on topics of interest to voters, Soldiers and military bases may not be used by candidates as part of election campaigns.

For additional information contact INSCOM Public Affairs at (703) 428-4965.